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Security Council

Fifty-fifth Year

Provisional

4099th Meeting

Monday, 7 February 2000, 1 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Listre	(Argentina)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	France	Mr. Teixeira da Silva
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Theron
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 23 December 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/1285)

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/13 and Add.1)

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The meeting was called to order at 1 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Sierra Leone

Letter dated 23 December 1999 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/1285)

Second report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2000/13 and Add.1)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Sierra Leone, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Security Council have before them the same documents considered at the 4098th meeting. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2000/34, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2000/31, containing the text of a letter dated 17 January 2000 addressed to the President of the Security Council from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, endorsing the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his second report.

I give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Kamara (Sierra Leone): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. My delegation has no doubt that with your diplomatic experience, you will successfully direct the affairs of this important organ during your tenure of office. At the same time, permit me to pay tribute to your predecessor, the representative of the United States, who, in the course of his presidency, declared January the "month of Africa" in the Security Council and worked tirelessly not only to make his declaration meaningful, but also to ensure that the Council did not ignore other areas of conflict on its agenda.

It is our hope that the momentum which was generated during the month of January will be maintained as far as possible in the coming months. Now that the Council has apparently refuted the notion that African issues were being given far less attention than those of other parts of the world, we hope that the Council will take appropriate and concrete action to help resolve the various conflicts which it considered during the month of January before they escalate further.

Perhaps as an extension of its work in January, the Security Council may wish to consider holding occasional joint sessions with the Economic and Social Council, another principal organ of the United Nations, whose functions also touch on the very survival of peoples throughout the world. Joint sessions on silent but potentially deadly conflict-related phenomena such as refugees, HIV/AIDS, malaria and malnutrition, which plague Africa today, would highlight the interrelationship between the roles of the two Councils as far as peace and human security are concerned.

The situation in Sierra Leone was not discussed formally in open meetings of the Security Council in January. However, intensive consultations were conducted behind the scenes on the draft resolution now before the Council. In our view, the decision to authorize an expansion of the peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone — the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) — is so far the most significant outcome of the "month of Africa" in the Security Council. Highlighting African issues in open and formal meetings of the Council is useful. Of course, African States would welcome the adoption of action-oriented resolutions on those issues. For our part, we are grateful

to the Council as a whole and to those Member States which helped lay the foundations for today's action on the situation in Sierra Leone.

We should also like to commend the Secretary-General for translating his knowledge of the peculiar circumstances in Sierra Leone and the subregion into bold and appropriate recommendations to the Security Council on our behalf, especially since the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement last July. My delegation also welcomes the stance which the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Sierra Leone took recently in response to unwarranted remarks about the Secretary-General and the role of the United Nations in the peace process.

The Government of Sierra Leone was seriously concerned about the possibility of a security vacuum in the country at the time of the imminent withdrawal of the remaining Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops from Sierra Leone. This, coupled with the relatively slow pace of the disarmament and demobilization process, was why we kept appealing to the international community to assist ECOMOG in ensuring the security of the State — a function which, under the terms of the Lomé Agreement, was linked to the phased creation and deployment of the restructured Sierra Leone armed forces. In this regard, let me emphasize here that Sierra Leone did not expect ECOMOG to remain in the country indefinitely.

The new timetable for the withdrawal of the remaining Nigerian contingent of ECOMOG, as well as the Security Council's decision to expand the military component of UNAMSIL to a maximum of 11,100 personnel, should allay some of our fears about the security of the State. The same applies to the Council's decision to give UNAMSIL, if not all, at least many, of the functions being performed by ECOMOG. In this regard, the Sierra Leone Government welcomes wholeheartedly the fact that the revised mandate and additional responsibilities of UNAMSIL are fully backed by Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

No one who has seen evidence of, or has read about, the conflict in Sierra Leone should be surprised by our elation over the fact that the Security Council is again authorizing UNAMSIL to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. We consider this one of the most significant provisions of the new resolution.

In closing, I would like to assure the Council that notwithstanding some problems of unfortunate events, such as those of January 1999, the overwhelming majority of Sierra Leoneans who want genuine peace continue to have faith in the ability and commitment of ECOMOG to protect the nation. They trusted and still trust ECOMOG. I know they are already developing the same degree of confidence in UNAMSIL's ability to facilitate the disarmament and demobilization process.

The adoption of this draft resolution will cast another ray of hope across Sierra Leone. It will serve as an additional assurance that this Council cares about their safety and security. It is also another confidence-building measure. The timely implementation of its relevant provisions should also contribute immensely to the consolidation of peace in the country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for the kind words he has addressed to me.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the vote.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Sierra Leone has come a long way since the bleak prospects of a year ago, and the thanks for that are due first and foremost, I think, to the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) who defended Freetown and prevented its fall to the rebels. So it is important that we begin today by giving credit to the ECOMOG forces. But the draft resolution we are about to pass marks a key transition from the ECOMOG stage. It marks the international community's readiness through the United Nations to take over ECOMOG's role and together with that the full responsibility for the provision of security in Freetown and at the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) camp, as well as for many other aspects of the Lomé peace process.

Sierra Leone may be a small country, but this is an enormous challenge for the United Nations. It is in effect no less of a test of the United Nations commitment

to conflict resolution in Africa than what we are contemplating for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is a test not just of our willingness to intervene — the deployment of the first phase of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has shown that — but of the United Nations actual ability to deliver effective peacekeeping of lasting impact and value.

As the six new UNAMSIL battalions deploy and move out into the north and east of the country, we will be asking them to ensure the disarmament of hard-core rebels in their own heartlands, and we will all need to stay in close touch with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), as the United Kingdom will, about UNAMSIL's capacity logistically and militarily to do this.

UNAMSIL is not a Chapter VII peace enforcement operation, but we all recognized in formulating the mandate for the force, as set out in the draft resolution before us, that this task will require a robust and serious stance against possible threats. UNAMSIL must act with the determination and the flexibility to see this through. The UNAMSIL Commander will need the full support of the Secretariat here in New York, and all UNAMSIL troop contributors must ensure that their troops are of a high standard, ready and able to meet the challenges that they face. In this respect we were very concerned at the DPKO report of the recent incident affecting certain UNAMSIL contingents.

I want to turn attention now also to the role of the wider international community. Without our continued determination and support, even an expanded UNAMSIL force cannot keep Sierra Leone on its current positive path. Sierra Leone will need sustained outside assistance for some time. The United Kingdom is committed to continue to be a significant player. Since March 1998 we have contributed nearly $65 million to Sierra Leone. We will press ahead with the substantial programmes of assistance which we have already established, in particular in the security sector, rebuilding and retraining the Sierra Leone armed forces.

But we and other current donors cannot shoulder the burden either indefinitely or alone. Wider and more substantive international support is needed. The first urgent requirement is funding for the DDR programme. The vast effort and expenditure involved in mounting this 11,000-strong United Nations force will be wasted if the DDR programme which they there to help implement is not fully funded. A further $23 million is needed now.

The international community also has a task in ensuring that the parties, and Mr. Foday Sankoh in particular, fulfil their commitments. We must press for this relentlessly. The leaders of the West African region have a particular responsibility and influence. If properly implemented, the Lomé Agreement will enable the Government of Sierra Leone to establish control over the whole of the country and its own resources for the first time in eight years. This is important not just for Sierra Leone and its people, but for the stability and prosperity of the whole subregion.

In substantively expanding UNAMSIL and widening its mandate, the Security Council today is acting again to help give the people of Sierra Leone the means to achieve the peace they so desperately need. We must assure that over the next crucial months we will give the United Nations force and the Government of Sierra Leone all the support and assistance they need in this to sustain the progress made in 1999.

Ms. Soderberg (United States): Last October the Security Council adopted resolution 1270 (1999) to establish the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). That resolution authorizes 6,000 military personnel to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. It was envisioned that United Nations troops and ECOMOG forces would each play a critical role in restoring peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

In December, the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced that they no longer would be able to sustain its Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) forces in Sierra Leone. We regret that decision but acknowledge the tremendous sacrifices and contributions of the troops of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and especially Nigeria, made in support of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone. With ECOMOG's decision to withdraw its forces, it is imperative to avoid a security gap. The peace process in Sierra Leone remains fragile and it is in all of our interest to help ensure its success.

Therefore, the United States supports the Secretary-General's recommendation to expand the mandate of UNAMSIL to take on the functions of the departing ECOMOG forces, and the United States will vote for the draft resolution before us today. To ensure there is no gap in security, we support the "rehatting" of two battalions of Nigerian ECOMOG troops remaining in

Sierra Leone. We welcome the Nigerian Government's agreement with that proposal and urge the United Nations and the Nigerian Government to work closely together to ensure an efficient and effective transition with adequate logistical support.

The former rebels still hold sway in much of the countryside and there are deeply disturbing reports that they have been intimidating UNAMSIL soldiers and seizing their weapons, placing the United Nations troops in the bizarre situation of being disarmed by the rebels, rather than the reverse. We are deeply alarmed by these reports and strongly condemn all such actions. We call on the leader of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), Foday Sankoh, and the leaders of the ex-Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels to bring an immediate halt to these dangerous and reprehensible actions. They must permit the United Nations forces to carry out their mandate in Sierra Leone without confrontation or violence.

We also call upon United Nations officials to address this problem quickly and effectively. The mandates of Security Council resolution 1270 (1999) and of the draft resolution on which we will vote today grant United Nations troops Chapter VII authority in the discharge of their mandate to take the necessary action to ensure the security and freedom of their personnel.

While much progress has been made, the peace process in Sierra Leone is now at an especially sensitive stage. The ceasefire is generally holding; over 13,000 combatants have entered demobilization sites; and some 7,000 have disarmed. But the situation remains volatile. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration into society of the estimated 45,000 ex-combatants are progressing slowly; the process has taken much longer than all of us had hoped. Logistical problems, fear and mistrust are among the many obstacles.

Helping the Government and people of Sierra Leone consolidate peace after eight years of civil war is a high priority for the United States. Our principal interests are in helping to ensure a durable peace, building a climate of respect for human rights and the democratic process, holding those responsible for atrocities accountable under agreed mechanisms, and providing humanitarian relief to the population. A peaceful Sierra Leone is important also in contributing to stability in West Africa.

We urge the utmost efforts by all concerned to carry disarmament, demobilization and reintegration through to a successful conclusion while conditions on the ground are still conducive to success. The United Nations must move quickly to ensure the success of the DDR programme that will pave the way for the consolidation of the peace process. DDR is a crucial element in encouraging refugees and the internally displaced to return to their homes.

We are especially concerned by the plight of the internally displaced, who outnumber the 500,000 Sierra Leone refugees and suffer many of the same vulnerabilities, but are often out of reach of effective humanitarian access. Roughly one third of the population of Sierra Leone is internally displaced. We call on all parties to adhere to their commitments in the Lomé Agreement to provide unfettered and safe access to all parts of the country for humanitarian workers. We must not allow these innocent victims of war to be neglected, and insist that all parties adhere to United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

We want the Lomé Agreement to succeed. The provisions for amnesty in the Agreement represent a difficult choice, taken by the signatories in order to end the fighting. We remain committed to justice and accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law. We are working to help the Government of Sierra Leone establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as the Human Rights Commission that is called for by the Agreement. We also favour an international fact-finding mission to support the work and proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation and Human Rights Commissions.

It is our hope that these Commissions can help bring healing and reconciliation to the people of Sierra Leone. Many have suffered for too long. With the assistance of the international community, we can help bring peace and reconciliation to Sierra Leone.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The draft resolution gives expression to the international community's commitment to peace in Sierra Leone. We are deeply grateful for the sacrifices made by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which has been working towards stability and security in Sierra Leone for the past three years. The decision to prolong ECOMOG's stay in order to ensure a smooth transition to a more robust United Nations presence is much appreciated. We also

commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Adeniji, for his tireless work in support of the restoration of a durable peace in Sierra Leone.

(*spoke in English*)

In adopting this draft resolution today, the Security Council is reaffirming its commitment to supporting the Lomé Peace Agreement and to bringing peace to Sierra Leone. The next phase of UNAMSIL will take on some of the heavy responsibilities that have to this point been ECOMOG's, notably support for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, maintenance of law and order in the main centres and protection of key facilities. In discharging these critical tasks, the Mission will have the benefit of a strong mandate that provides for the protection of civilians, within, of course — as the draft resolution notes — its capabilities and areas of deployment. Canada believes that this is a sign that we are learning from past mistakes and that current and future peacekeeping missions in Africa will be able to count on the full support of the international community.

For Sierra Leone, this commitment is both timely and necessary. More than 30,000 former combatants are yet to be disarmed. Some 4,000 children abducted during the war are still missing. Large areas of the country remain inaccessible to aid agencies; the humanitarian and human-rights situation in those areas can only be imagined. Banditry is a constant menace. The next phase of UNAMSIL ought to provide much-needed stability and security, ensuring improved humanitarian access and vital support to the DDR process. Canada will help to sustain these objectives by contributing $9 million towards peace-building projects, including DDR, and the reintegration of war-affected children. We are also pleased to contribute military observers to UNAMSIL.

Canada welcomes the profound concern for human security manifest in this draft resolution. The inclusion of provisions for landmine action and for the conscientious management of Sierra Leone's natural resources represents an innovation in the crafting of peacekeeping mandates. It also shows great awareness of the fact that human security remains a constant challenge, even after the guns fall silent.

It is our hope that this commitment will be acknowledged and replicated by the parties to the conflict. We are heartened by the recent joint effort by the Government of Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP) and ECOMOG to raise awareness of and confidence in the disarmament programme. We continue to view the situation in Sierra Leone with eyes wide open, however, and trust that RUFP leader Foday Sankoh's recent negative comments regarding the United Nations do not foretell a drift from the path towards peace. We are glad to hear from Mr. Annabi that, indeed, Mr. Sankoh believes that he was misunderstood in this regard.

The task ahead is, indeed, daunting. The United Nations, with this draft resolution, is poised to make a significant contribution to the effort. We encourage all the leaders of Sierra Leone to work with us and bring the suffering of their people to an end.

With regard to Ambassador Van Walsum's suggestion and generous remarks about our efforts with regard to the examination of how the illegal trade in diamonds impacts on civil war in Africa, I will be presenting the report of the expert panel to the Council in mid-March. I expect that, at that time, we will be hearing a fair amount about the vicious nexus between the illegal marketing of diamonds and the purchase of war matériel and, more generally, about the truly corrosive nature of the impact of these high-value materials on such volatile situations as those which pertain in Sierra Leone and Angola and on the individuals and Governments involved. I therefore wholeheartedly agree with Ambassadors Van Walsum and Chowdhury that further study, perhaps following the presentation of the report of the expert panel next month, on these issues within the Council is indeed timely and warranted.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): Long before it became a member of the Security Council, Ukraine was following closely the developments in Sierra Leone. The important draft resolution to be adopted at this meeting gives us our first opportunity to outline the major elements on the basis of which Ukraine will address the situation in Sierra Leone as a member of this body.

We highly appreciated the courage and responsibility shown by Sierra Leoneans which resulted in the taking of momentous decisions aimed at bringing an end to the long-lasting civil war in their country. The Lomé Peace Agreement, signed on 7 July 1999 by the parties to the conflict and by the regional and international mediators, provided an opportunity for the people of Sierra Leone to return to the path of reconciliation. At the same time, Ukraine does not want to conceal its judgement that this instrument is far from perfect. The blanket amnesty

provisions contained in the document are the major cause of our reservations. In this respect we fully associate ourselves with the stance taken by the United Nations that the amnesty and pardon outlined in article IX of the Lomé Agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Ukraine would like to acknowledge the major contribution of the African countries — first and foremost, of the members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), under the leadership of Nigeria — to the initiation of the peace process in Sierra Leone. Our country attaches particular importance to the success of this process since we are convinced that it could help inspire the restoration of peace in other parts of the continent. It is the major reason why Ukraine is strongly determined to encourage the international community to provide substantive support to the implementation of the Lomé Agreement. We cannot but emphasize that the primary role in this endeavour is to be played by the Security Council.

The Security Council has already heard in this Chamber words of cautious optimism regarding the progress achieved so far in the implementation of the Lomé Agreement. As a new member of the Council, we will do our best to hasten the moment when the peace process will instead be characterized by the words "steady advancement". However, the current situation on the ground is a cause of great concern, as was confirmed by the briefing of Mr. Annabi.

Ceasefire violations, the frequent harassment of and attacks on civilians, banditry and weapons smuggling — all of these seriously undermine the peace process. The fact that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is proceeding at a snail's pace constitutes yet another source of serious concern.

The decision of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to withdraw its troops from the territory of Sierra Leone has certainly been the major incentive for the draft resolution before the Council today. We understand the reasons that led the contributing member States of ECOMOG to take that decision. Under these circumstances, the United Nations should take increased responsibility for ensuring that the security vacuum is filled and to prevent the recurrence of fighting.

Against this backdrop, the decision on the expansion of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) will be a truly fundamental action by the Security Council. For its part, Ukraine is willing to make a practical contribution to this effort. I am pleased to inform the members of the Council that the Government of Ukraine has indicated its intention to provide an Mi-24 helicopter unit to the expanded UNAMSIL.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my country's support for the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): During the recent period the situation in Sierra Leone has remained relatively stable, and the Lomé Peace Agreement is on the whole being implemented. However, as Mr. Annabi pointed out, there are still numerous destabilizing factors within the country, and the situation remains fragile. We are particularly concerned about recent words and deeds of the Revolutionary United Front and of Mr. Sankoh, and about the possible effects of these words and deeds on the peace process. We are deeply disquieted by the fact that the humanitarian situation remains grim and by the frequency of human rights violations. We hope that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants will be undertaken in a timely and effective manner.

The Chinese delegation pays tribute to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) for their outstanding work in maintaining stability and promoting the peace process in Sierra Leone over such a long period of time. We also note the observation of the Secretary-General, contained in his letter of 23 December 1999, that due to changed circumstances, ECOMOG will no longer be able to continue its vital mission in Sierra Leone; in particular it will no longer be able to provide security in Freetown and at the international airport at Lungi or to protect the Government of Sierra Leone.

China has always advocated timely and practical action by the Council in support of the peace process in Sierra Leone. In view of the present situation and the request of the Government of Sierra Leone, we fully endorse the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report: to expand the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and broaden its mandate.

After several rounds of consultations, the draft resolution to be voted upon now basically reflects the

views of all sides in a comprehensive and balanced manner. Therefore, we support this draft resolution.

We are also gratified to note that the first phase of the deployment of UNAMSIL is being speeded up, and we appreciate the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard. At the same time, it is our hope that after the adoption today of the draft resolution by the Security Council, the Secretariat will move quickly to implement it, so that reinforcements will soon be in place to expeditiously carry out the transfer from ECOMOG and so that UNAMSIL can take up its duties pursuant to the provisions of the resolution as soon as possible.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: Before proceeding to the vote on the draft resolution, I must point out, especially to the delegation of Sierra Leone, that I had intended to speak in my national capacity, but in view of the lateness of the hour, I will convey those words to the Council in writing.

I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2000/34.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, China, France, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1289 (2000).

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.